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PAGE 01 NEW DE 02338 01 OF 02 151630Z

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT IN

SUBJECT: UTTAR PRADESH AND AFTER

SUMMARY: THE IMMINENT STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTION IN POPULOUS
UTTAR PRADESH (UP) IS IN FACT A MID-TERM POPULAR REFERENDUM
ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S GOVERNMENT. SHE AND CONGRESSMEN AT
EVERY LEVEL ARE CAMPAIGNING HARD--WITHOUT COMPLACENCY BUT
WITHOUT MUCH OPTIMISM EITHER. THEY COUNT ON HER HOME-STATE
APPEAL TO THE RURAL MASSES; PLENTIFUL CAMPAIGN FUNDS; UNPRE-
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 02338 01 OF 02 151630Z

CEDENTED PORK-BARREL LARGESSE; THE BROAD CASTE, COMMUNITY,
AND MINORITY APPEAL OF THEIR LOCAL CANDIDATES; AND AN

EXTENSIVE (IF RAMSHACKLE) PARTY ORGANIZATION TO WIN A MAJORITY OF SEATS WITH A PLURALITY OF VOTES. THE DIVIDED OPPOSITION IS EXPLOITING WIDESREAD POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER INFLATION, SCARCITIES, AND CORRUPTION. SHOULD THE CONGRESS FAIL TO FORM A STATE GOVERNMENT, UP WOULD BECOME A POLITICAL LIABILITY ADDED TO THE MAJOR ECONOMIC ONES THE PRIME MINISTER ALREADY BEARS. THE MOST PROBABLE PROGNOSIS IS CONTINUED INSTABILITY IN UP--AND THUS ELSEWHERE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE STAKES: THE FEBRUARY 24-26 ELECTION OF A NEW 425-MEMBER UP LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (AND SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS IN ORISSA, NAGALAND, MANIPUR, AND PONICHERRY) CONSTITUTES A NATIONAL MID-TERM POPULAR REFERENDUM ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S "NEW" CONGRESS GOVERNMENT. THREE YEARS HAVE PASSED (TWO TO GO) SINCE HER 1971 LOK SABHA SWEEP; TWO YEARS AGO CONGRESS WON NEARLY ALL THE STATE ASSEMBLIES (THE NEXT SCHEDULED ELECTIONS OCCUR IN 1977). UP IS NOT ONLY INDIA'S MOST POPULOUS STATE (OVER 90 MILLION CITIZENS, OR ONE INDIAN IN SIX) BUT ALSO THE HOME OF GENERATIONS OF CONGRESS LEADERS, INCLUDING THREE NEHRUS. LESS BACKWARD THAN NEIGHBORING RAJASTHAN, MADHYA PRADESH, AND BIHAR, UP'S POLITICAL COLORATION AFFECTS THOSE STATES DIRECTLY AND THE WHOLE COUNTRY INDIRECTLY. WERE THE CONGRESS TO LOSE BADLY--EVEN IF IT REMAINED THE LARGEST SINGLE PARTY--STATE-LEVEL OPPOSITION PARTIES AND CONGRESS DISSIDENTS WOULD BE EMBOLDENED TO REPEAT THE GUJARAT PATTERN (SUSTAINED VIOLENT ANTI-CONGRESS DEMONSTRATIONS TO BRING DOWN THE STATE GOVERNMENT) ELSEWHERE. POLITICAL DISARRAY, COMBINED WITH CONTINUING ECONOMIC DETERIORATION AND RISING LEVELS OF VIOLENCE, WOULD IMPEDE THE PRIME MINISTER'S ABILITY TO MANAGE THE ELECTION OF A PLIABLE PRESIDENT IN AUGUST. JUST CONCEIVABLY, SHE MIGHT FACE A CHALLENGE TO HER RULE FROM WITHIN THE CONGRESS BEFORE 1974 ENDS. TO THE OPPOSITION, THE ELECTIONS OFFER THE FIRST CHANCE SINCE 1972 TO EXCHANGE THEIR PRECARIOUS ELECTORAL TEE-HOLD FOR A SOLID FOOTING. WERE AN OPPOSITION COALITION TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, THEY WOULD PRSS A CLAIM IN PARLIAMENT AND THE STREETS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD LOST HER NATIONAL MANDATE.

2. INITIAL MANEUVERS: DURING THE JUNE 13/NOVEMBER 8 PERIOD
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PAGE 03 NEW DE 02338 01 OF 02 151630Z

OF "PRESIDENT'S RULE", THE NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES FAILED TO FORM A UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE CONGRESS. CHARAN SINGH, THE STRONG MAN OF THE SMALL LANDOWNER/BACKWARD CASTE-DOMINATED BKD PARTY, AND C. B. GUPTA OF THE OPPOSITION CONGRESS COULD NOT AGREE ON WHO WOULD LEAD AN ALLIANCE. THE HINDU/HINDI CHAUVINIST JANA SANGH PARTY DECIDED TO GO IT ALONE. CHARAN SINGH FINALLY FORGED AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SAMYUKTA SOCIALIST SPLINTER AND THE EVEN SMALLER MUSLIM JAJLIS. THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA - MARXIST, NEITHER BOASTING A BASE IN UP, ALSO FORMED A FRONT.

3. THE RULING CONGRESS, WITH A DEFECTOR-HEAVY MAJORITY OF ABOUT 270 (ONLY 211 WERE ACTUALLY ELECTED IN 1969) IN THE OUTGOING ASSEMBLY, FOUND IT ALMOST EQUALLY DIFFICULT TO STAKE OUT A PRE-POLL POSITION. DISCREDITED FORMER CHIEF MINISTER KAMLAPATHI TRIPATHI MANEUVERED CEASELESSLY TO RETURN TO POWER, THEN RELUCTANTLY JOINED THE UNION MINISTRY. HIS DYNAMIC YOUNGER RIVAL, H.N. BAHUNUNA, BACKED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, FORMED A STATE MINISTRY EXCLUDING TRIPATHI'S CRONIES BUT HEAVILY WEIGHTED IN FAVOR OF THE MINORITIES--"HARIJANS", MUSLIMS, MEMBERS OF "BACKWARD" CASTES, YOUTH, AND WOMEN. AFTER THREE WEEKS OF BARGAINING, DURING WHICH HUNDREDS OF HOPEFULS SWARMED INTO THE NEW DELHI BUNGALOWS OF UP FACTION LEADERS, THE CONGRESS ON JANUARY 19 ANNOUNCED NOMINEES FOR 403 SEATS. THE MINORITIES PLUS AGING "FREEDOM FIGHTERS" WERE WELL REPRESENTED. ONE HUNDRED CONGRESS LEGISLATORS WERE DENIED RENOMINATION, INCLUDING SEVEN CORRUPT AND/OR SLOTHFUL MEMBERS OF TRIPATHI'S CABINET.

4. THE CONGRESS LEFT 22 SEATS UNCONTESTED IN FAVOR OF THE PRO-MOSCOW COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI) AND AGREED TO "FRIENDLY CONTESTS" IN TEN OTHER CONSTITUENCIES. THE CPI THEN ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD CONTEST TEN MORE SEATS, SUBJECTING THE CONGRESS-CPI ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENT TO EVEN GREATER STRAIN. THE PRIME MINISTER FAVORS THE ENTENTE--IT GIVES THE CONGRESS A "RADICAL" IMAGE, SPLITS THE LEFT OPPOSITION, AND YIELDS CPI CADRE SUPPORT FOR THE CONGRESS, WHICH ITSELF LACKS DEDICATED LOCAL PARTY WORKERS. AS IN ORISSA, THE CONGRESS-CPI ENTENTE IS COMING UNDER INCREASING FIRE FROM CONGRESSMEN; SHOULD THEY LOSE, THE ENTENTE (AND INDIRECTLY THE PRIME MINISTER) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 04 NEW DE 02338 01 OF 02 151630Z

WOULD BE BLAMED. THE ALLIANCE IS UNDER EQUAL ATTACK FROM WITHIN THE CPI, WITH ONE PARTY LEADER--S.A. DANGE--CRITICAL OF THE LINK WITH CONGRESS WHILE ANOTHER--BHUPESH GUPTA--DEFENDS IT. THE KEY ISSUE FOR THE CPI IS WHETHER PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION WITH CONGRESS HANDLING OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION AND PRICES IS RISING TO THE POINT WHERE THE COMMUNISTS WILL BE HURT RATHER THAN HELPED BY THE ASSOCIATION. SCHNEIDER

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 02338 02 OF 02 151853Z

44

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5. THE CAMPAIGN: THE CONGRESS IS THROWING EVERYTHING INTO THE CAMPAIGN. IT HAS RAISED AN ELECTION FUND CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED AT RS. 10 CRORES (\$12 MILLION), MOSTLY IN "BLACK MONEY". THE CHIEF MINISTER HAS GRANTED OR PROMISED INCREASED BENEFITS TO FARMERS, TENANTS, AND FARM WORKERS, TO THE MINORITIES, AND TO SUGAR-CANE GROWERS, GOVERNMENT SERVANTS, AND TEACHERS. YOUTH HAS BEEN PROMISED FOUR NEW UNIVERSITIES. OTHER AREAS HAVE BEEN SLIGHTED TO PROVIDE UP WITH FOODGRAINS, KEROSENE, COAL, DIESEL OIL, ELECTRIC POWER, AND CEMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS DEDICATED SOME 26 INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRIAL PROJ-
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 02338 02 OF 02 151853Z

JECTS IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS. SHE, UNION MINISTERS, CHIEF MINISTERS FROM OTHER STATES, AND THE UP CABINET AND CANDIDATES HAVE STRESSED THE DANGER FROM THE RIGHT (REACTION AND COMMUNALISM) IN THEIR EXTENSIVE CAMPAIGN TOURS; ONLY THE CONGRESS,

THEY ARGUE, CAN ASSURE STABILITY AND EFFECT CHANGE. FACED WITH STUDENT AND OPPOSITION-ORRGANIZED ELECTION RALLY DISTURBANCES, SHE HAS ARGUED THAT INFLATION IS DUE TO 1971-72 WAR AND REFUGEE COSTS, THE RISE IN CRUDE OIL PRICES, AND WORLD TRENDS. SHE HAS BLAMED SCARCITIES ON HOARDERS AND BLACK-MARKETEERS IN LEAGUE WITH HER ENEMIES. THAT ELECTION MATERIALS HAVE NOT REACHED CANDIDATES IS ONLY ONE INDICATION OF THE HIGH LEVEL OF CONGRESS INFIGHTING AND THE CHAOTIC STATE OF THE PARTY ORGANIZATION. CANDIDATES' LOCAL APPEAL, NOT THE AILING PARTY ORGANIZATION, WILL PULL MOST WINNERS THROUGH.

6. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE UNDERSTANDABLY EXPLOITED THE GROWING POPULAR DISCONTENT MOST NOTICEABLE IN THE CITIES (UP IS ABOUT 13.5 PERCENT URBAN). DESPITE THE GOVERNMENT'S UTMOST EFFORTS, RATIONED FOODGRAINS, OTHER CONSUMER NECESSITIES, AND INDUSTRIAL RAW MATERIALS ARE STILL NOT READILY AVAILABLE. STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS HAVE TURNED SHARPLY AGAINST THE CONGRESS, A NOTABLE SWITCH FROM 1971. IN RURAL AREAS, OPPOSITION LEADERS COMMISERATE WITH LANDOWNERS OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S "UNREMUNERATIVE" PROCUREMENT PRICES FOR FOODGRAINS AND PLAN ON THEIR FEARS OF LAND REFORM. SHARECROPPEES AND LANDLESS LABORERS ARE REMINDED THAT UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER THEIR POVERTY HAS INCREASED, NOT BEEN REMOVED AS SHE HAD PROMISED. THE FAILURE OF WHEAT TRADE TAKEOVER IS ROUNDLY SCORED EVERYWHERE. THE MUSLIM LEAGUE, ONCE AGAIN ACTIVE IN ITS PRE-PARTITION HOME, AND THE JALIS HARP ON MUSLIM RESENTMENT OVER EDUCATION AND JOB DISCRIMINATION AND POLICE PERSECUTION. CHARAN SINGH AND OTHERS HAVE ARGUED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS MORTGAGED INDIA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE TO THE USSR. THE USA HAS FIGURED ONLY IN THE MOST MARGINAL WAY IN THE CAMPAIGN SO FAR, MAINLY IN A FEW REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER ON DIEGO GARCIA.

7. THERE HAS BEEN ALMOST NO SERIOUS VIOLENCE SO FAR, ALTHOUGH CONGRESS JEEPS HAVE BEEN DAMAGED AND SPEAKERS MOLESTED. A FEW OBSERVERS NONETHELESS ARGUE THAT IF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 NEW DE 02338 02 OF 02 151853Z

CONGRESS SEES ALL IS LOST, IT WILL ENGINEER RIOTS AND POSTPONE THE POLL. THIS SEEMS MOST UNLIKELY.

8. NO PREDICTIONS: OF THE NEARLY 50 MILLION VOTERS, HALF USUALLY GO TO THE POLLS. THE GENERAL FEELING THUS FAR IS THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAS NOT "CAUGHT FIRE" AND THAT THE VOTERS ARE MARKED BY LASSITUDE. A LOWER TURNOUT SHOULD HELP THE CONGRESS UNLESS "HARIJANS" ARE THE MAIN STAY-AT-HOMES BUT WOULD ALSO BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. THERE ARE 4,052 CANDIDATES (A NEW HIGH), OR OVER NINE PER CONSTITUENCY. MULTIPLE

CNADIDACIES ALSO USUALLY BUT NOT LWAYS HELP THE CONGRESS, WHICH WON 198 SEATS WITH 32 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN 1967 AND 211 SEATS WITH 33.7 PERCENT IN 1969. GIVEN THE WIDELY VARRYING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RESULTS OF PAST ELECTIONS, THE BEWILDERING VARIETY OF ECONOMIC AND CASTE GROUPS, THE NUMBER OF PARTIES AND CANDIDATES, AND THE POSSIBILIITIES FOR LAST MINUTE DEALS AND PAYOFFS, THE ONLY SAFE PREDICTION IS THAT THE CONGRESS WILL EMERGE AS THE LARGEST SINGLE PARTY.

9. SOME BORADER IMPLICATIONS: WHAT IF THE CONGRESS WINS BIG (240-PLUS SEATS)? THIS MOST IMPROBABLE RESULT WOULD STRENGTHEN THE PRIME MINISTER'S BELIEF THAT CHARISMA, MONEY, AND TACTICAL MANEUVERING ARE ENOUGHT AND WOULD INHIBIT FURTHER THE MAPPING OF SOUNDER LONG-TERM POLITICAL/ECONOMIC STRATEGIES. IRRONICALLY, SUCH A VICTORY WOULD PROBABLY BE BAHUNGUNA'S UNDOING, AS THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD SEE HIM AS A POTENTIAL RIVAL AND EVENTUALLY EDGE HIM OUT. IF THE CONGRESS WINS 200 OR MORE SEATS, IT WOULD FORM A GOVERNMENT ALONE OR WITH THE AID OF DEFECTORS. THE JLOT TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND RULING PARTY WOULD BE SALUTORY BUT THE CHANCES FOR INSTABILITY WOULD INCREASE. IF THE CONGRESS ANNEXES FEWER THAN 200 SEATS AND IS FORCED INTO COALITION (MOST PROBABLY WITH THE BKD OR THE CONGRESS-9), BAHUNGUNA WOULD BE OUT AND THE NATIONAL PARTY MIGHT WELL MOVE TO THE RIGHT. AN OPPOSITION VICTORY AND SUBSEQUENT COALISTION GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A HARSH BLOW TO THE PRIME MINISTER, ENDANGERING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND PERHAPS EVENTUALLY HER OWN POSITION. SUCH A COALITION WOULD PROBABLY SOON FALL APRT OR BE UNDERMINED AND TOPPLED BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 NEW DE 02338 02 OF 02 151853Z

THE PRIME MINISTER.

10. UNHAPPILY FOR THE PEOPLE OF UP, THEIR PROBLEMS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED NO MATTER WHO WINS. THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN SUPPLIES TO THE STATE WILL PROBABLY COME TO AN END AFTER FEBRUARY 26. DIVERSION OF ELECTRIC POWER FROM OTHER STATES WILL CEASE. POWER CUTS ARE RUMORED FROM MARCH 1. THE QUALITY OF STATE ADMINSTRATION IS UNLEKELY TO CHANGE; MANY OF THE DEDICATION STONES FOR NEW PROJECTS WILL BE COVERED WITH GRASS FOR YEARS TO COME. IF THIS DOES NOT RESULT IN THE CONTINUATION OF UNREST AND SPORAIC VIOLENCE AND IN THE CONTINUUING GROWTH OF DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, WE WILL BE SURPRISED.

IN SUM, THE PROBABLE OUTLOOK IS FOR MORE INSTABILITY IN UTTAR PRADESH, WHICH WOULD SOON BE REFLECTED ELSEWHERE AS WELL. SCHNEIDER

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